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FLOOR DEBATE

March 30, 2006 LB 845

night, there's an average 5,000 people on the street, Friday night. By the way, a large number of those 5,000 people have been drinking. There are car accidents, there are fights, there are crowded sidewalks. The number of people strains law enforcement and brings people, the redeployment of our existing police force, into that area. There are 109 liquor licenses in that area. The result is that people are...the police are seeing people at closing time who are more drunk than they are at any other previous time, and they all get into their cars and leave from that location. Now, the question is, should Lincoln be able to take into account that phenomenon when saying yes or no to a new liquor license on top of the 109 liquor licenses that are there now? Or should they be able to say, you know what, we're using enough of our police resources in that neighborhood; you can have a liquor license but put it in the suburbs someplace? That is the authority that we give to municipalities and the commission, ultimately, with this language; that the density factor is a legitimate factor to take into account. Understand it does not allow you to create a maximum number of licenses. It simply says that you do have the power to see to it that there isn't an undue concentration in one area. I would ask for the advancement of LB 845. I don't believe there are any committee amendments. It was reported out of committee and, if I've got the...well, take a look at the gadget and you'll see that the committee report and it will list the folks that are in favor and opposed. The opponents included the retail groups, the grocery stores and the convenience stores. By the way, ask yourself this question: If you're a grocery store or convenience store, have you already got your liquor license? Yeah, you do. If you're a new convenience store and a grocery store, are you going to go in from 11th to 14th Street in Lincoln? No. Are you going to go into the Haymarket area in Omaha? No. Are you going to go into the tenderloin area of some large Nebraska community? No. You're going to go to the suburbs where you're not going to have this problem. My guess is that this is just that tinderbox sensitivity about somebody who just can't stand the idea of not having, you know, total freedom to do whatever they want to do, whenever they want to do, wherever they want to do it. And the truth of the matter is I cannot foresee convenience stores or grocery stores being stopped from going places. I will tell you